

REMARKS

Claims 1-20 are currently pending in the application. By this amendment, claims 1, 5, 6, 8, 9 and 12-14 are amended and claims 15-20 are added for the Examiner's consideration. The above amendments do not add new matter to the application and are fully supported by the specification. For example, support for the amendments is provided at Figures 4 and 8, and at pages 5-7 of the specification. A marked-up copy and clean copy of the specification is also attached hereto. Reconsideration of the rejected claims in view of the above amendments and the following remarks is respectfully requested.

Allowed Claims

Applicants appreciate the indication that claims 12 and 13 contain allowable subject matter. Claims 12 and 13 are amended to independent format to include all the features of the base claim and any intervening claims. This should now place claims 12 and 13 in condition for allowance. However, Applicants submit that all of the claims are in condition for allowance for the following reasons.

Objection to Specification

The specification has been objected to for not including titles. Attached hereto are a marked-up copy and a clean copy of the specification. The specification now includes titles and comports with U.S. Patent practice. No new matter has been added.

35 U.S.C. §112 Rejection

Claims 5, 6 and 8-14 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §112, 2nd paragraph. This rejection is respectfully traversed.

Claims 5, 6, 8, 13 and 14 are amended to correct minor deficiencies and for clarity. The amendments provide terms with proper antecedent basis. As to claim 12,

Applicants submit that the use of the "lever" is proper and is not confusing or indefinite. Claim 12 depends on claim 11, which recites a lever (in addition to a linearly displaceable lever and a pivot lever). Claim 9 is amended to boarded its scope.

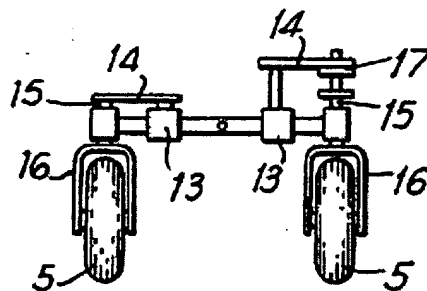
Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request that the rejection over claims 5, 6 and 8-14 be withdrawn.

35 U.S.C. §102 Rejection

Claims 1-7 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) for being anticipated by U. S. Patent No. 4,953,645 to Korber et al. This rejection is respectfully traversed.

The Examiner is of the opinion that Korber shows all of the features of claims 1-7. In the invention, the wheelchair has two driven wheels and at least one castor which are mounted in a rotatable manner in a fork which can be pivoted about a vertical axis. The fork is connected to a steering linkage, but the connection can also be releasable from the steering mechanism. This feature is provided by a bolt, which is generic to all of the embodiments. The bolt can be loaded by a spring, also a feature that is generic to all embodiments. These features are not shown in Korber.

In Korber, pivotally mounted swivel wheels 5 are suspended from wheel forks 4. As shown in FIG. 2, reproduced below, each of the pair of swivel wheels 5 may be provided with an associated steering actuator 13.



In the above structure, a toothed belt 14 for each wheel transmits the rotary motion of the steering drive means to shaft 15 of the respective wheel fork 16. The steering drive means 13 is connected to shaft 15 through -clutch or coupling 17. The coupling 17 can be disengaged such that the swivel wheel 5 is free to pivot. However, as admitted by the Examiner, Korber does not show a bolt.

Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request that the rejection over claims be withdrawn.

35 U.S.C. §103 Rejection

Claims 8-11 and 14 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) for being unpatentable over Korber in view of U. S. Patent No. 5,170,529 Kovacs. This rejection is respectfully traversed.

The Examiner is of the opinion that the Kovacs reference shows a bolt and that it would have been obvious to combine the bolt of Kovacs with the wheelchair of Korber to achieve the rejected claimed invention. Applicants do not agree with the Examiner.

First, the Kovacs reference is directed to a foot operable cart with a wheel lock; whereas, the Korber reference is directed to a wheelchair. Although both Korber and Kovacs show castor wheels, these references are of such divergent arts that one of ordinary skill in the art would not have looked to the Kovacs reference in for the features, proposed by the Examiner and combine this feature with the Korber wheelchair.

Second, even if one were to combine the references, as suggested by the Examiner, Applicants submit that this combination would not result in the claimed invention. In Kovacs, a pin 50 is moved into an out of engagement with notches 60 formed in a bearing race 62 of each castor. The pin 50 is engaged and disengaged from the notches via a wire arm 44 connected between the pin 50 and a lever arm 28. In this manner, movement of the lever arm 28 will, in turn, result in movement of the pin 50. However, there is simply no spring loading on the pin, itself.

Applicants further submit that Kovacs, despite the Examiner's assertion, does not show many of the remaining features of the claimed invention. For example, the combination of Korber and Kovacs does not show or suggest:

1. Claim 8: the bolt which can be pushed, transversely to the vertical axis, into a recess provided in the fork pin. (In Kovacs, the pin is inserted into a recess of the bushing.)
2. Claim 9: the bolt can be displaced counter to the force of the spring. (In Kovacs, the pin is displaced by movement of the lever arm and hence the wire arm.)
3. Claim 10: the bolt can be displaced via a pivot-lever arrangement. (Kovacs does not show a pivot-lever arrangement.)
4. Claim 11: the bolt can be displaced via a linearly displaceable lever, a pivot lever acting on the lever. (Kovacs does not show such an arrangement.)

Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request that the rejection over claims 8-11 be withdrawn.

Other Matters

Claims 15-20 are added for the Examiner's consideration. Claim 15 is a new independent claim and claims 16-20 have their dependencies originating from base claim 15. Claim 15 is distinguishable over the prior art. Claim 15 recites, for example, a recess about a circumference of the fork pin which is enagagable with a bolt to

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releasably connect the fork to the steering linkage. This feature, amongst others, is not shown in the references applied by the Examiner.

CONCLUSION

In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, Applicants submit that all of the claims are patentably distinct from the prior art of record and are in condition for allowance. The Examiner is respectfully requested to pass the above application to issue. The Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the telephone number listed below, if needed. Applicants hereby make a written conditional petition for extension of time, if required. Please charge any deficiencies in fees and credit any overpayment of fees to Deposit Account No. 19-0089.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Andrew M. Calderon', written over a rectangular stamp area.

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